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UNCLAS BUJUMBURA 000430

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR AF/C AND DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL BY
SUBJECT: BURUNDI ARRESTS FNL SPLINTER GROUP LEADER

¶1. Summary: (U) The Burundian police reportedly arrested PALIPEHUTU-FNL splinter group leader Jean Bosco Sindsayagaya on June 1 during his meeting with an unnamed PALIPEHUTU-FNL colleague at Chez Andre, a local Bujumbura restaurant. Although a number of local radio stations have confirmed the details of his arrest, there remains significant uncertainty over the exact date and location of his apprehension. Sindsayagaya's colleague, apparently an FNL party member with no special position, was arrested as well. Both men are reportedly being detained in the headquarters of the District Prosecutor, Police Judiciaire des Paquets. There is no further information regarding potential charges or the anticipated length of their incarceration. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) A police spokesman for the Ministry of Interior, Ildephonse Mushwabure, told embassy officers that, three days prior to Sindsayagaya's arrest, the ministry issued an edict requiring any police officer immediately to arrest the rebel leader should their paths cross. Mushwabure further explained that, in the eyes of the Government of Burundi (GOB), Sindsayagaya does not represent the PALIPEHUTU-FNL and is considered merely an outlaw. The GOB is currently negotiating the resumption of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM), born out of the September 2006 cease-fire agreement, with the PALIPEHUTU-FNL faction led by Agathon Rwasa.

¶3. (SBU) Contrary to the media reports, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense, Adolphe Manirakiza, indicated to embassy officers that Burundi's Security Service arrested Sindsayagaya's on May 31 in the Bujumbura community of Kinundo. Manirakiza also claimed the headquarters of the Security Services as Sindsayagaya's original place of detention but subsequently transferred to the Police Judiciaire des Paquets. African Public Radio (APR) originally conveyed a similar account but later reported Sindsayagaya's arrest as taking place at Chez Andre restaurant on June 1.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Sindsayagaya and his followers reportedly broke with PALIPEHUTU-FNL leader Agathon Rwasa in 2005. However, the Government of Burundi has declined to negotiate with this faction, and the group is not included in the provisions of the September 2006 cease-fire agreement, nor in plans for reintegration.

MOLLER